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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Letter dated 24 November 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, I have the honour to enclose herewith the communiqué on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, adopted by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on 20 November 2008 (see annex).

I request that you kindly circulate the above-mentioned communiqué as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 15 and 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ileana **Núñez Mordoche**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba
to the United Nations
Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement

08-62431 (E) 021208

Annex to the letter dated 24 November 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, adopted by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on 20 November 2008

The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement met in New York at United Nations Headquarters on 12 November 2008 and considered, inter alia, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) express their serious concerns regarding the deterioration of the situation on the ground and the extensive hardships being endured by the Palestinian people as a result of ongoing violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. NAM also expresses concern at the lack of progress made in the peace process in the year that has passed since the Annapolis Conference, which generated momentum and high expectations for advancement of the process towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

NAM expresses grave concern about Israel's continued use of military force against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continues to cause death and injury to civilians, including children, and destruction to Palestinian property and infrastructure, as well as its continued collective punishment of the Palestinian people by measures that constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law, violate virtually all of the human rights of the Palestinian people, and continue to devastate socio-economic conditions.

NAM expresses particular concern about the dire humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and reiterates its call for the immediate lifting of Israel's inhumane closure and siege of Gaza, by which it continues to obstruct the movement of persons and goods, including food, medical, fuel and other essential supplies. In addition, NAM calls again on the occupying Power to remove the hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles that are restricting freedom of movement in the West Bank, causing serious damage to the Palestinian economy and severely undermining the Territory's contiguity and integrity.

NAM also expresses grave concern about Israel's continuing settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in and around East Jerusalem. In grave violation of international law and its commitments in the peace process, Israel continues and has accelerated its confiscation of Palestinian land, construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall and its transfer of Israeli settlers to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. NAM condemns Israel's illegal settlement activities, which are undermining the peace process and seriously threatening the viability of the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security, and reiterates the call for their immediate cessation. NAM also expresses its alarm at the rising incidence of Israeli settler violence, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties and calls upon the occupying Power to take all necessary measures to bring an end to the

settler violence and lawlessness and to hold the perpetrators of crimes against Palestinian civilians accountable for their actions.

In the light of this critical situation on the ground and lack of progress in the peace process, NAM urges all concerned parties, including the Quartet, to exert the necessary efforts to bring a halt to Israel's illegal practices, including its settlement activities and collective punishment measures, in order to stem the deterioration of the situation, alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and create conditions on the ground that are conducive to the advancement of the peace process and its ultimate success.

NAM stresses that the current transitional period is also a fragile period in which the international community, including the Security Council, must not remain complacent and must be active in shouldering its legal, political and moral responsibilities vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and redoubling its commitment and efforts in support of the peace process negotiations towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace settlement, including a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees.

Finally, on the forthcoming occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestine People and on the occasion of the commemoration by the Palestinian people of the twentieth anniversary of their Declaration of Independence on 15 November, NAM takes this opportunity to reaffirm its unwavering support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause. NAM further reaffirms its long-standing principled positions calling, inter alia, for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab lands occupied since 1967, the realization by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination, the establishment of their independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.